

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Robert L. Davis
Chief of Police

SUBJECT: FALSE ALARM CALLS

DATE: May 20, 2005

Approved

/s/

Date

06/02/05

This memorandum is prepared in response to a question from the 2005-2006 Budget Study Session for the Public Safety CSA. The inquiry focused on the number of 9-1-1 calls that are bogus, as well as the percentage of false alarm calls received by the Department.

Occasionally, 9-1-1 calls will be received that are not valid emergency calls-for-service. In these instances, the bogus calls are re-directed or resolved as expediently as possible in order to free up communications resources, which includes both computer resources and staff time. The Communications Division has never tracked the number of bogus calls received via the Department's computer aided dispatch (CAD) system because a CAD event is not generated.

A review of alarm statistics reports managed by the Permits Unit within the Bureau of Administration indicates that the Department received 17,362 alarm calls during calendar year 2003. Approximately ninety-six percent (16,647) of the total alarm calls were false alarms in this time period. During CY 2004 (note: alarm and false alarm call data spans January- November 2004), the Department received 15,298 total alarm calls, with approximately ninety-six percent (14,693) of the total alarm calls being false alarms.

The above-mentioned statistics were compiled from monthly reports generated by staff within the Permits Unit. The Permits Unit receives routine data updates from Information Technology staff assigned to the Police Department Systems Development Unit and then cross-references each alarm call record with data from FAIR (False Alarm Incident Report) cards and citations in order to validate false alarm calls. The false alarm data is then input into a dedicated database application that tracks and reports related information for various administrative tasks, including billing for false alarm ordinance violations. In accordance with the False Alarm Ordinance, there is no fee for the first two false alarm citations within a 60-day period. For three or more occurrences within this 60-day period, the Permit Unit prepares the list of violations and the Finance Department prepares the billing and collection.

Public Safety CSA reports indicate the number of 9-1-1 calls received during calendar years 2003 and 2004 as 193,660 and 186,598 respectively. Alarm calls are not dispatched via 9-1-1. There are special telephone lines into the Dispatch Center dedicated for alarm calls. These calls are then dispatched from CAD, and they are handled as emergencies but not as a Priority One 9-1-1.

/s/

ROBERT L. DAVIS
Chief of Police

RLD/SD